planning to set up joint ventures companies in the field of distribution. The perceived advantage of this system is improved customer service through private management, retaining at the same time a certain minimum extent of control over ownership necessary for ensuring that the joint venture companies operate in a transparent manner.

(c) No, Sir.

Rationalisation of Power Tariff

299. PROF. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are planning to rationalise power tariff, if so, what are the objectives and details of steps to be taken in this regard; and

(b) how Government are planning to finance the above-mentioned programme with details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) Yes, Sir. The Common Minimum National Action Plan for Power (CMNPP), finalised in the Chief Ministers, Conference on Power recommends establishment of State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SERC) in each state. Determination of retail tariffs, including wheeling charges etc. will be decided by SERCs which will ensure a minimum overall 3% rate of return to each utility. Cross subsidisation between categories of consumers may be allowed by SERCs. No sector shall, however pay less than 50% of the average cost of supply, agriculture tariff not being less than 50 paise per Kwh to be brought to 50% of the average cost in not more than 3 years. Recommendations of SERCs will be mandatory and for any deviation from tariff recommended by it, the State Government/Uts have to provide for the financial implication of such deviation in the State/UT budget a package of incentives and disincentives to encourage and facilitate the implementation of tariff rationalisation by the States will also be introduced.

(b) Central Government has introduced a bill in the monsoon session (1997) of the Parliament for establishment of a Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, (CERC) and State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERC). The funding shall be met by the respective Governments. Central Government is actively supporting State Governments in their effort to introduce power sector reforms. The World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Power Finance Corporation have also been assisting the States in power sector reforms.

Government of India has available through Power Finance Corporation funds for metering and transmission/distribution system improvements.

Setting up of Power Project at Vishakhapatnam

300. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to set up 1000 MW Power projects at Visakhapatnam by NTPC;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken so far for implementing the project; and

(d) by when the project is likely to commence?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The project located at Simhadri near Pittavanipalem Village in district Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh has been accorded Government approval in July, 1997 and comprises two units of 500 MW each.

(c) and (d) The infrastructure works like approach road, construction power, soil testing etc., have taken up. The land acquisition for the project is in progress. The tender for supply and erection of main plant equipment and associated works on trunkey basis has been invited in October, 1997. The project is scheduled for commissioning during the 9th Plan.

Consumption and Distribution of Power in Maharashtra

301. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the consumption pattern and distribution of available power to agricultural and industrial sectors in Maharashtra at present;

(b) whether entire demand of these sectors is being met;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) The average consumption pattern and distribution of available power to Agriculture and Industrial sector in Maharashtra in the recent past is an follows:

Category	Percentage
Domestic	17
Commercial	6
Industries	40
Public Lighting	1
Traction	3
Agriculture	30
Public Water Works	3
Miscellaneous	—
	100

(b) to (d) There is no power cut on industrial and agricultural sectors in Maharashtra. Therefore, the entire demand of these sectors is being met.

Additional power generation during the Ninth Five Year Plan

302. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to increase power generation during the 9th five year plan period;

(b) if so, the various sources through which additional power is proposed to be generated in the said plan period;

(c) whether Government are laying emphasis on the renovation and modernisation of power projects;

(d) if so, the funds earmarked therefor in the 9th plan;

(e) the additional power expected to be generated by renovating and modernising the power plant; and

(f) the total amount of investment proposed to be made in power sector in the said plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) to (f) The Ninth Plan has not been finalised. Physical targets and the resources required have consequently not yet been firmed up. However, during the 9th Plan, it is proposed to develop all the appropriate and available fuels/ sources to generate additional power. From stations identified for renovation and modernisation (Phase II), an additional generation of about 19 billion units is expected.

During 1997-98, the target for generation is 429 billion units as compared to 394.4 billion units generated last year. This consists of 343.8 billion units from thermal, 8.5 from nuclear and 76.7 from hydro generating stations.